

Federal commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) offenses include child sex trafficking and the production, trafficking, distribution, and possession of child pornography. They do not include child sex abuse offenses because there are no commercial aspects involved in such offenses.

The annual number of defendants prosecuted for CSEC charges nearly doubled between 2004 and 2013, from 1,405 cases to 2,776. The annual number of suspects referred to U.S. attorneys for CSEC offenses also increased (54%) during this period, from 2,972 suspects to 4,579.

Characteristics of CSEC suspects

From 2004 to 2013, a CSEC crime was the most serious offense investigated (i.e., lead charge) for 37,105 suspects referred to U.S. attorneys for investigation. Suspects referred for possession of child pornography (72%) made up the majority of all CSEC suspects, followed by child sex trafficking (18%) and child pornography production (10%) suspects.

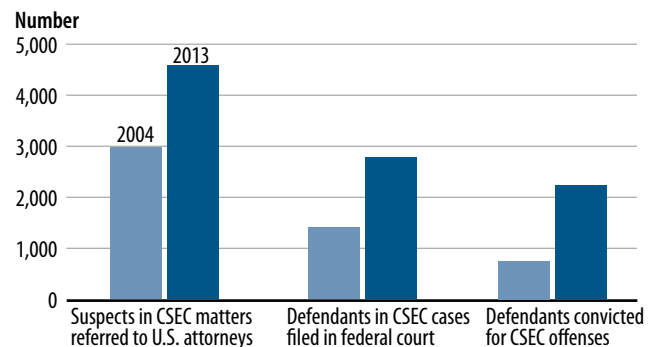
Overall, most suspects arrested for CSEC crimes were male (97%), U.S. citizens (97%), white (82%), had no prior felony convictions (79%), and were not married (70%). The median age of CSEC suspects was 39 years, and more than half (56%) had no more than a high school education.

Outcomes of CSEC charges

Of the 36,080 suspects with a CSEC lead charge in matters that were concluded by U.S. attorneys during this period, 60% were prosecuted in U.S. district court, 36% were declined for prosecution, and 4% were disposed by U.S. magistrates. The percentage of CSEC suspects prosecuted was higher than the percentage of suspects prosecuted for violent (58%), property (53%), and public order (42%) offenses.

From 2004 to 2013, a total of 19,801 adjudications in federal cases involved a CSEC charge, and 95% of those adjudications resulted in a conviction. Nine out of 10 adjudicated CSEC cases resulted in convictions from guilty pleas. Trials led to a conviction in 4% of CSEC adjudications.

Suspects in commercial sexual exploitation of children matters referred, and defendants in cases filed and convicted, 2004 and 2013



Note: CSEC = commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, based on data from the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys, National Legal Information Office Network System database, fiscal years 2004 and 2013; Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, criminal master file, 2004 and 2013; and U.S. Sentencing Commission monitoring data files, 2004 and 2013.

Convictions of CSEC defendants

Nearly all (98%) CSEC defendants convicted in U.S. district court received prison time. This was higher than the percentage of persons sentenced to prison in all other major offense categories—property (63%), public order (64%), violent (91%), weapon (92%), drug (93%), and immigration (96%). Most (97%) convicted CSEC defendants received prison-only sentences, less than 2% received prison terms combined with community confinement, and less than 1% received probation or probation with confinement conditions.

Prison sentences for defendants convicted of CSEC offenses were among the longest in the federal justice system. Between 2004 and 2013, the mean prison sentence for convicted CSEC defendants increased 99%, from 70 to 139 months. In 2013, the mean prison sentence for defendants who were convicted of production of child pornography (321 months) was longer than those convicted of child sex trafficking (133 months) or possession of child pornography (66 months).

The full report (*Federal Prosecution of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Cases, 2004-2013*, NCJ 250746), related documents, and additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics can be found at www.bjis.gov.